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Ay, rather would she pay her throe
And take her joy : to quit all pain
His lips are on her breast again—
Sing low, the Eve of Mary !

Sing low, indeed ; and softly bleat,
You lambing ewes, about her feet,
Lest ye should wake the Child from sleep.
No other hour so still and sweet
Shall fall for Mary's heart to keep,
Until her death-hour on her creep—
Sing soft, the Eve of Mary !

CAROL OF MARY AND MARIAMNE

Was a Maiden sweet to see,
White and pure as lilies be ;
Black as bird's wing was her hair
Folded meekly on her brows ;
Like a moonbeam in the house
Went she, leaving blessings there.
Joseph, the old carpenter,
Saw, and loved, and wedded her.

Was a Lady great and fair,
With red gold upon her hair—
Plaited full and purfled deep.
Herod took her for his bride,
Set her splendid at his side,
Kissed her doubts and fears to sleep.
High-born dame and peasant may
Wedded on the selfsame day.

Mariamne's gold-shod feet
Were too dainty for the street ;
Barefoot the girl Mary went
From her mother to her lord.
Mariamne's bosom-bird

Sang her sick with discontent.
Mary's breast-bird did not stir
Till an angel came to her.

When she prayed within her room,
Rose and lily-flower in bloom
Were the only sweets she had;
But the room was not so poor,
Since God's angel in the door
Stood, and gave her greeting glad:
"Blessed, and a Maid thou art,
With thy Son beneath thy heart!"

Mariamne sewed nor spun
Birthrobes for her little son.
Like to carven ebony,
Mariamne's hair lay spread
On gold cushions sewn with red.
Divers sought and spoiled the sea,
That her neck no pearl might miss
Tiréd for King Herod's kiss.

Mary's pains on her gat hold
When the winter night was cold;
Was a manger for her bed:
And no music and no charm
Bade avaunt the pain and harm.
Bitter was her bearing-bread,
Tears were all her bearing-wine,
Where she lay among the kine.

Mariamne lay on silk,
But her man-child lacked the milk.
Lutes and flutes made music sweet
When the birthing-pain grew sore.
Charms were written on her door,
Amulets were on her feet.
Mary had no crown to hide
Where her sweat of sorrow dried.

Mariamne wailed, and slept,
And forgot that she had wept;
 While her women night-watch held
Round the son that she had borne,
Lapped in silk a queen had worn—
 Garments scented and be-spelled.
Little God did her deny,
Yet her mother-breast was dry.

Mary in the stable lay—
Mary Mother, Mary may—
 Held her Babe upon her breast,
Sang Him lovely lullaby.
But the death that He would die
 Knew not, and so lay at rest,
Holding God and Man in one,
While her bosom fed her Son.